



National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA-2013-0115]

Technical Report: Evaluation of the Certified-Advanced Air Bags

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Request for comments on technical report.

SUMMARY:

This notice announces NHTSA's publication of a Technical Report reviewing and evaluating certified-advanced air bags. The report's title is: *Evaluation of the Certified-Advanced Air Bags*.

DATES: Comments must be received no later than February 28, 2014.

ADDRESSES:

Report: The technical report is available on the Internet for viewing in PDF format at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811834.pdf>. You may obtain a copy of the report free of charge by sending a self-addressed mailing label to Nathan K. Greenwell (NVS-431), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room W53-438, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590.

Comments: You may submit comments [identified by Docket Number NHTSA-2013-0115] by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.
- Fax: 1-202-366-3189.
- Mail: Docket Management Facility, M-30, U.S. Department of Transportation, West Building, Ground Floor, Rm. W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590.

- Hand Delivery: West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., between 9 am and 5 pm Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

You may call Docket Management at 202-366-9826.

Instructions: For detailed instructions on submitting comments, see the Procedural Matters section of this document. Note that all comments received will be posted without change to <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information provided.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Nathan K. Greenwell, Mathematical Statistician, Evaluation Division, NVS-431, National Center for Statistics and Analysis, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room W53-438, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590. Telephone: 202-366-3860. E-mail: nathan.greenwell@dot.gov.

For information about NHTSA's evaluations of the effectiveness of existing regulations and programs: You may see a list of published evaluation reports at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/cats/listpublications.aspx?Id=226&ShowBy=Category> and if you click on any report you will be able to view it in PDF format.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The purpose of this report is to analyze the changes and redesigns of frontal air bags and their effect on occupant protection in frontal crashes. Frontal air bags have gone through a series of changes in response to amendments to Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 208, "Occupant crash protection." In 1998-1999, vehicle manufacturers were permitted to sled test in lieu of a barrier impact to certify that the air bags would protect an unbelted occupant ("sled certification"), which allowed air bags to be redesigned by depowering and/or reducing the volume or rearward extent of air bags. Then in 2003-2006, air bags were required to not deploy at all for children or deploy only at a low level of force ("certified-advanced air bags"). Most manufacturers chose to not deploy air bags at all for children, using occupant detection sensors to

suppress the air bags. Statistical analyses of crash data compare fatality risk with certified-advanced and sled-certified air bags.

- Fatality risk in frontal crashes was 4 percent lower for drivers with certified-advanced air bags than with sled-certified air bags; for right-front passengers, it was 2 percent higher; at neither position is the difference between certified-advanced and sled-certified air bags statistically significant.
- The fatality rate, in frontal crashes per billion vehicle registration years showed a 4 percent reduction overall, 5 percent reduction for drivers, and 5 percent reduction for child right-front passengers 12 and younger, after vehicles were equipped with certified-advanced air bags. None of these were statistically significant.

Overall, the analysis found no evidence that certified-advanced air bags result in higher fatality risk to front-seat occupants in frontal crashes when compared to sled-certified air bags.

PROCEDURAL MATTERS:

How can I influence NHTSA's thinking on this subject?

NHTSA welcomes public review of the technical report. NHTSA will submit to the Docket a response to the comments and, if appropriate, will supplement or revise the report.

How do I prepare and submit comments?

Your comments must be written and in English. To ensure that your comments are correctly filed in the Docket, please include the Docket number of this document (NHTSA-2013-0115) in your comments.

Your primary comments must not be more than 15 pages long (49 CFR 553.21). However, you may attach additional documents to your primary comments. There is no limit on the length of the attachments.

Anyone is able to search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review DOT's

complete Privacy Act Statement in the Federal Register published on April 11, 2000 (65 FR 19477) or you may visit <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Please send two paper copies of your comments to Docket Management, fax them, or use the Federal eRulemaking Portal. The mailing address is U. S. Department of Transportation, Docket Management Facility, M-30, West Building, Ground Floor, Rm. W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590. The fax number is 1-202-366-3189. To use the Federal eRulemaking Portal, go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

We also request, but do not require you to send a copy to Nathan K. Greenwell, Mathematical Statistician, Evaluation Division, NVS-431, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room W53-438, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590 (or e-mail them to nathan.greenwell@dot.gov). He can check if your comments have been received at the Docket and he can expedite their review by NHTSA.

How can I be sure that my comments were received?

If you wish Docket Management to notify you upon its receipt of your comments, enclose a self-addressed, stamped postcard in the envelope containing your comments. Upon receiving your comments, Docket Management will return the postcard by mail.

How do I submit confidential business information?

If you wish to submit any information under a claim of confidentiality, send three copies of your complete submission, including the information you claim to be confidential business information, to the Chief Counsel, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590. Include a cover letter supplying the information specified in our confidential business information regulation (49 CFR Part 512).

In addition, send two copies from which you have deleted the claimed confidential business information to U. S. Department of Transportation, Docket Management Facility, M-30, West Building, Ground Floor, Rm. W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590, or submit them via the Federal eRulemaking Portal.

Will the agency consider late comments?

In our response, we will consider all comments that Docket Management receives before the close of business on the comment closing date indicated above under DATES. To the extent possible, we will also consider comments that Docket Management receives after that date.

Please note that even after the comment closing date, we will continue to file relevant information in the Docket as it becomes available. Further, some people may submit late comments. Accordingly, we recommend that you periodically check the Docket for new material.

How can I read the comments submitted by other people?

You may read the materials placed in the docket for this document (e.g., the comments submitted in response to this document by other interested persons) at any time by going to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for accessing the dockets. You may also read the materials at the Docket Management Facility by going to the street address given above under ADDRESSES. The Docket Management Facility is open between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

AUTHORITY: 49 U.S.C. 30111, 30168; delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8.

Issued in Washington D.C. on October 28, 2013.

James F. Simons

Director, Office of Regulatory Analysis
and Evaluation

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